THE CRITIC

JOURNAL OF BRITISH AND FOREIGN LITERATURE AND THE ARTS:

A Guide for the Library and Book-Club, and Booksellers' Circular.

(PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY.)

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The annual general meeting of the French Academy of Inscriptions et Belles Lettres was held on Friday at the Institute, M. Pardessus in the chair. The meeting was numerously attended by persons distinguished in literature, science, and the arts. The chairman announced that the prizes had been adjudged as follows:—The first to M. Neumann, professor of History at the Academy of Munich, for his work on "The Emigrations and Succession of Population on the North of the Black and Caspian Seas, from the third to the eleventh century;" a medal to Mr. Akerman, for his work entitled "Coins of the Romans relating to Britain;" and another to M. Friedlœnder, for his work entitled "Die Munzen der Astgothen." On the antiquities of France the Academy awarded the first medal to M. Cauvin, for his "Géographie Ancienne du Diocèse du Mans;" and the extraordinary prize given by Baron Gobert, to M. Jules de Petigny, for the third volume of his "Etudes sur l'Histoire, les Lois, et les Institutions de l'Epoque Mérovingienne." The subject proposed by the Academy for the ordinary prize of 1847 is "L'Histoire de l'Etude de la Langue Grecque dans l'Occident de l'Europe depuis la fin du cinquième siècle jusqu'à celle du quatorzième." After the ordinary business of the day the secretary read an interesting notice on "The Life and Works of M. Emeric David," and also a fragment of a "History of the Formation and Progress of the Tiers Etat of the 13th and 14th Centuries," by M. Augustin Thierry.

The *Glasgow Saturday Post* mentions a patriarch, Robert Arkless, a working man, aged seventy-three. "He has been wedded to five wives, and has been the father, up to this time, of thirty-three children. He has been one of the church's best customers. Of his children, twenty-nine have died, and of his wives, four. This gives thirty-three funerals. As all his wives were churched for each birth, he has paid for thirty-three churchings. As all his children, up to this time, have been christened, this gives thirty-three christenings. Having been five times married, he has paid for five weddings. This is a pretty account. A century ago he would have been taken to court and rewarded as a praiseworthy subject. He is now working for 1s. a-day, and his wife for 8d., his master allowing him house and garden."

Gold and Platina.—At St. Petersburgh, the Minister of the Interior has presented a report to the Emperor, which gives the following statistics relating to the gold and platina mines of Russia:—The former have yielded, since the commencement of their working in 1815, and up to the close of 1844, about 9,000 pounds of fine gold,—having a value of 150,000,000 roubles, or 24,000,000*l.* sterling; and the latter since 1819, when they were first worked, 2,000 pounds—representing 7,000,000 roubles, or 1,120,000*l.*—forming a total of 157,000,000 roubles, or 25,120,000*l.* The gold and platina mines of Russia are nearly all in the Ural and Altai chains of Mountains.

REGISTER OF NEW PUBLICATIONS,

From August 9 to August 16.

NOTICE TO BOOKSELLERS.

A Register lies at THE CRITIC OFFICE, *in which the Publishers of Books, Music, and Works of Art, in town and country, are requested to enter all new publications, with their sizes and prices, as soon as they appear. The weekly list will be regularly inserted in this department of* THE CRITIC, *and no charge will be made either for registration or for publication in* THE CRITIC. *Particulars forwarded* by letter *will be duly inserted.*

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GLEANINGS.

PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS.—A return of the annual amount taken for admissions during the years 1841, 1842, 1843, and 1844, has been laid before Parliament. It appears that the total sum received at the doors of Westminster Abbey amounted, in 1841, to 1,585*l.*; in 1842, to 1,290*l.*; in 1843, to 1,486*l.*; and in 1844, to 1,330*l.* The sum charged each person is 6d. to view all the monuments, but the public are admitted to the south transept gratis, and each individual is only charged 3d. to view the whole of the monuments in the great nave of the abbey only, and an additional 3d. to view the remainder. The monuments are explained by guides appointed for that purpose, and no further remuneration is on any account to be received. The appropriation of the above moneys is for such ornamental improvements of the abbey and buildings belonging thereto as do not fall within the ordinary repairs of the fabric (which is maintained out of the funds of the Dean and Chapter usually appropriated to that specific purpose), or in any manner at the discretion of the Dean and Chapter, so that it be not made use of for any other object for which the Dean and Chapter, individually or collectively, are bound to provide. The total amount received at the doors of St. Paul's Cathedral amounted, in 1841, to 429*l.*; in 1842, to 425*l.*; in 1843, to 538*l.*; and in 1844 to 517*l.* The number of persons admitted to the armoury of the Tower of London from 1st of February, 1841, to 1st of February, 1845, amounted to 238,791; namely, 107,267 in 1841; 44,673 in 1842; 42,903 in 1843; and 43,948 in 1844. The amount of money received from these 238,791 persons, at 6d. each, was 5,969*l.* The payment made during the above interval of four years amounted to 5,993*l.* of which 1,272*l.* was appropriated to the purchase of armour and ancient weapons; 3,376*l.* to allowances to warders, collectors, and armoury keepers; and 1,344*l.* was paid to the Paymaster-General. There was a balance due to the accountant, on the 31st of January last, of 23*l.* 10s. 10d. Since the reduction of the fees, free admissions have been granted only to artists for the purposes of study, and to free schools, on application to the Board of Ordnance. The number of visitors to the jewel-house amounted, in 1841, to 72,882; in 1842, to 32,957; in 1843, to 37,016; and in 1844, to 29,679; the payment of fees being concurrently 1,822*l.*, 823*l.*, 925*l.*, and 741*l.* The total expenditure, in 1841, was 1,441*l.*; in 1842, 1,370*l.*; in 1843, 1,332*l.*; and in 1844, 1,343*l.* The falling off of the fees of the last three years as compared with 1841 has been occasioned by the destruction of the armoury by the fire of October, 1841, that exhibition being the chief attraction to the visitors of the Tower. The number of visitors admitted free of charge, to view the apartments and pictures at Hampton-court, amounted, in 1843, to 176,334; and in 1844, to 159,760. The number of visitors to that rural retreat is greatest in the months of May, June, July, and August, and always least in February.

The planet Saturn is now favourably situated for observation. He rises during this week between eight and nine, p.m., and will be due south about an hour after midnight. The apparent length of the minor axis of his ring is increasing every evening, and will reach his maximum for the present year at the latter end of August. A telescope, with a magnifying power of 60 to 70, will shew the ring beautifully; but to observe the division in the ring, and its shadow upon the body of the planet, will require a power of 200 or greater. Mars rises about an hour after Saturn, and may easily be distinguished from him by the naked eye by his red appearance. From his near approach to us, Mars now appears larger than Saturn, although the diameter of the latter is more than 15 times that of the former. Saturn is nearly a thousand times as large as our own globe, while Mars is considerably less than it.

During the last week, a person named Groombridge, residing at St. Margaret's, discovered a pigeon lying in a very exhausted state in a field near his residence. On picking up the pigeon, it proved to be one of the carrier species, and had a small billet attached to one of its legs, communicating intelligence of an extensive insurrectionary movement in Spain. The finder took the pigeon to his house, where he supplied it with food, and detained it till the following morning, when, after adding to the billet the particulars of the detention at St. Margaret's, he released the winged messenger, which instantly soared aloft to a considerable height, and steering to the North, was soon lost sight of.—*Dover Telegraph.*

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